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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 002043

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SUBJECT: GEORGIA: FRIENDS OF SYG DISCUSS FOLLOW-UP TO BONN
MEETING

REF: TBILISI 1604

Classified By: CDA Mark X. Perry for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On August 7, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (D/SRSG) Ivo Petrov briefed representatives of the Group of Friends of the UN Secretary General (U.S., Germany, France, Britain, and Russia) on progress by the sides in implementing steps agreed to during their June 27-28 meeting in Bonn, Germany. Petrov said that the sides did not resume Quadripartite meetings (QPM) on law enforcement in July as agreed and there has been no further discussion between the sides on the issue. Cooperation on African Swine Fever (ASF) has also not moved forward, he said, and there has been no progress on the establishment of maritime communication between Trabzon, Turkey and Sukhumi. He noted that some progress had been made on the investigation into the disappearance of David Sigua and the ICRC initiative on missing persons. He said UNOMIG established an observation team base in Kodori on July 18, but UNOMIG's other three proposals for monitoring Kodori - allowing UNOMIG patrols outside the zone of conflict (ZOC), unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) patrols of the gorge, and placement of artillery radar - have not yet been agreed upon. End Summary.

Georgians look to change QPM format

¶2. (C) Petrov told the Friends that the sides did not reconvene a QPM on law enforcement in July as originally agreed in Bonn. He said that the Abkhaz and CIS PKF have responded to a draft terms of reference for future Quadripartite meetings, but the Georgians have not yet responded. In a July 19 meeting at the State Ministry for Conflict Resolution, Petrov said that the Georgians told him that the QPM composition was not how it was discussed in Bonn. The Georgians told him that they wanted the EU, OSCE, and Group of Friends to also participate, which Petrov characterized as a change of format that was not agreed to in Bonn. German Ambassador Flor responded by saying that the Friends should continue to press the Georgians to resume the QPM meetings, adding that there was no doubt in Bonn that the sides agreed to technical level meetings with no mention of a format change. (Note: The Georgians are currently reviewing the draft terms of reference in an interagency group process. Some Georgian officials have expressed concern that the draft would allow the CIS peacekeeping force to retain the leading role in the QPMs. End note.)

UNOMIG Kodori proposals

¶3. (C) On July 18, the UN established an observation post in Kodori as one of the four CBMs proposed by UNOMIG in the wake of the March 11 attack on Georgian government buildings in upper Kodori. Petrov said that the remaining three measures - UNOMIG patrols in Georgian and Abkhaz controlled

territory adjacent to the ZOC, UAV patrols of the gorge, and placement of an artillery radar in the gorge - have not yet been implemented. Petrov characterized UAV patrols and artillery radar as more complicated issues that will require further study by international experts prior to implementation. He said they have asked UN headquarters in New York to send an expert on artillery radar systems to determine how well such a radar would work inside the steep valleys of Kodori. British Ambassador Keefe suggested that the Defense Attaches of the respective embassies could also help, and proposed sending them to Kodori to also conduct feasibility studies or provide support to the UN experts. Petrov suggested that the DATTs raise the issue during their meeting with UNOMIG Chief Military Observer, General Khattak, the week of August 13.

No further steps on ASF, Maritime cooperation

¶4. (C) Petrov said that there has been no further progress on the establishment of maritime communications between Trabzon, Turkey and Sukhumi. The Abkhaz have proposed a meeting on ASF through the cooperative mechanism established by the UN during the Avian Influenza outbreak last year, he said, adding that the Abkhaz have had to kill all of their pigs in the lower Kodori gorge after some pigs tested positive for ASF. He said the Abkhaz claim that infected pigs washed downriver from Georgian-controlled upper Kodori, spreading the infection to their pigs. Despite this, he said, the Abkhaz remain willing to cooperate on the issue.

Sigua investigation off to good start

TBILISI 00002043 002 OF 002

¶5. (C) Petrov said that the Joint Fact Finding Group (JFFG) started its investigation into the disappearance of David Sigua with a "substantive" meeting on August 6 in Gali. He said the investigation included interviews with Sigua's wife and nephew and a site inspection of Sigua's house to determine possible routes Sigua's abductors may have taken. Because most of the UN JFFG team are military experts, it took some time to bring in outside experts with experience in missing persons, causing a delay in the start of the investigation. Nevertheless, he characterized the meeting as a "good start." The next JFFG meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 10. Separately, he said that the two sides also had a productive Steering Committee meeting for the EC-funded programs in Abkhazia on July 4 in Zugdidi. Both sides made compromises during the meeting, he said, and are now preparing their points for the third phase of the EC economic rehabilitation program. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for early autumn.

ICRC initiative on missing persons moving forward

¶6. (C) Petrov said both sides are close to agreement on an informal working level meeting, hosted by the ICRC, in Cyprus in September, to discuss the issue of Georgians and Abkhaz still missing after the war. Minister of Refugees Giorgi Kheviashvili is scheduled to attend for the Georgian side. Petrov also said there may be a higher level meeting in October, but no agreement has yet been reached.

Comment

¶7. (C) Some of the lack of progress on the steps agreed to in Bonn may be attributed to the absence of SRSR Arnault, who has been away on vacation, and the seeming ineffectiveness of his deputy, Petrov, to push the sides to fulfill their agreements. Petrov's unwillingness to assume responsibility on these issues was clearly evident during the meeting, where he repeatedly deferred questions to Khattak or Arnault, who

returned on August 13. We hope that Arnault's return will reinvigorate the process and will continue to work with him to push the sides to implement their Bonn agreements.

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